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**Malawi writeshop brief for the Africa RISING website**

Between 27-31 July, Africa RISING Malawi hosted a writeshop event at Club Makokola Retreat in Mangochi, Lake Malawi, involving 35 participants that included project scientists, local extension and international partners from CABI and the International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI). The writeshop aimed to synthesize the past three years experiences from Africa RISING project as well as long term insights from the McKnight Foundation funded best-bets project in Malawi, with the goal of promoting scaling out of sustainable intensification approaches relevant to production circumstances of smallholder farmers in Malawi (and elsewhere). This invariably calls for production of simple products that can be readily used by farmers and other stakeholders in different value chains. The first day of the writeshop focused primarily on lessons learned, transitioning into writing and plenary feedback sessions over the next three days. The writing sessions were organised around the following themes:

1. Fertilizer targeting and land quality
2. Maize-legume intensification
3. Soil organic matter (SOM)
4. Extension and communication and,
5. Scaling

Participants joined the different themes based on interest and comparative competencies (with some perceived undemocratic seeding of a few participants). Each of the thematic teams identified the available data sources, key results and gaps that still needed to be filled. During the last day, each of the teams presented scientific article outlines, fact sheet outlines, and in some cases, outlines on technology briefs appropriate to development partners. Below is a summary of the main products that are under development.

Plenary discussions during the writeshop

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| Fact sheets/  posters/leaflets | * Nutrient targeting factsheet   + Amounts of fertilizers for legumes, and appropriate placement   + Extend and distribution of responsive and non-responsive soils. * Extension approaches to manage complexity * Crop factsheets: soyabean, groundnuts * Doubled-up legumes technology: Intercropping two grain legumes with different growth habits increases land productivity * SOM: Linking farmer resources with practices for soil health * Pigeonpea: Feeding the Family, Feeding the Soil |
| Policy guide | * Integrated fertilizer policy guide for maize-legume systems in Malawi   + Limited knowledge about current and future Fertilizer Input Subsidy Program (FISP) direction in Malawi   + Appropriateness of policy environment on procurement and supply of fertilizer |
| Technology brief outlines | * Doubled-up legume technology : a high impact approach for building sustainable smallholder farming systems in Malawi |
| Scientific article outlines | * Phosphorus use efficiency and productivity of soybean and pigeonpea as affected by edaphic and environmental factors * Sustainable intensification: above and belowground biomass additions in pigeonpea cropping systems in Malawi * Synergies and tradeoffs between productivity and environmental outcomes from legume diversification of smallholder maize-based systems in Malawi * Participatory evaluation of climbing and bush bean varieties in contrasting agroecologies in central Malawi * Community dimensions for adoption and scaling up of legume technologies in rainfed maize systems in Malawi * Exploiting niches for livestock intensification in farming systems |

At the end of the writeshop, each of the groups produced a plan for completing the publication of articles and fact sheets that had been initiated, including identification of people responsible for leading the write-up of each of the products. Prof Mateete, the Africa RISING Chief Scientist for East and Southern Africa, challenged participants to take advantage of this opportunity to make a difference towards sustainable intensification for the sake of the next generation!



Dr Shamie Zingore from IPNI passionately puts forward his vision on nutrient management on smallholder farms



Michelle Hockett from MSU during a feedback session